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M.C.  
Presorted Standard

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CongressmanAdamSmith

## Committee Leadership

As the Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Smith worked with his colleagues to pass the FY2012 National Defense Authorization Act. This legislation, which passed the House on May 26, 2011, provides authority for the activities of the Department of Defense, the national security programs of the Department of Energy, military construction, and other defense and military personnel activities. The bill included a number of important provisions including a pay raise for military personnel, investing in research and development for emerging technologies, and authorizing funding to ensure our troops and the tools and resources they need to do their jobs.

## Stay in Touch

Whether working in Washington, DC or Washington State, my primary focus is representing the constituents of the 9<sup>th</sup> Congressional District. To that end, your thoughts and concerns are critical in helping me make well-informed decisions on the issues facing our country.



Adam meets with Fang Wong, The National Commander of the American Legion to discuss veterans' benefits and retiree issues.

## Please stay in touch by:

Calling (253) 593-6600;

Visiting <http://adamsmith.house.gov> and sending an email;

Follow me on Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook.

## Veterans Town Hall

Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, 11am-12:30pm  
Gary and Carol Milgard Family HOPE Center  
10402 Kline Street SW, Lakewood, WA 98499

Congressman Adam Smith, Washington's 9th District

# Veterans Day Update

November 2011

Improving the Quality of Life for Veterans and Military Families



As we celebrate Veterans Day on November 11<sup>th</sup>, I wanted to update you on my efforts in Congress to support our nation's veterans and their families.

At the beginning of this year, I assumed a new position in the House of Representatives as Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee. In this new role, I have had the opportunity to work more closely with the committee, my colleagues in the House and Senate, the leadership of our Armed Forces, and many groups and organizations in our veterans' community to address the most pressing needs facing our veterans.

The men and women who have accepted our country's call to duty deserve our respect and admiration. Every day, these individuals risk their own lives in an effort to protect the values and rights we often take for granted, and the first priority of our nation should be to ensure they and their families are taken care of.

With significant deficit spending and a national debt of more than \$14 trillion, we must demand accountability and fiscal responsibility when it comes to our nation's spending habits. However, we must exercise caution to ensure that any reductions in defense spending do not negatively impact military personnel, retirees, veterans, or their families.

Veterans and their families face a unique set of challenges. Over the past year, I have been particularly focused on addressing high rates of veteran unemployment and homelessness, as well as veterans' access to health care and benefits.

Only 1% of our nation's population volunteers to serve in the military, but their sacrifice improves all of our lives every day. I will continue to support our veterans and their families here in Congress.

Thank you for you and your family's service to our nation.



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CongressmanAdamSmith

**"In my opinion, as legislators,**

**helping vets and military families is our most important job."**

*Adam Smith (WA-09)*

## **Veteran Employment**

Congress must ensure that our veterans' transition back into civilian life is greeted with the benefits and support they deserve for their years of faithful service. High unemployment among our veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserves is alarming. Veterans of our Armed Forces are some of the most hardworking and disciplined individuals who have much to contribute to the American workforce. While their military jobs may not directly transition to a civilian position, their skills do.

On October 12<sup>th</sup>, the House passed, with Congressman Smith's support, the Veterans Opportunity to Work Act, H.R. 2433. The bill would provide veterans with access to one year of full-time education or training at accredited schools or programs between June 2012 and March 2014. According to the Congressional Budget Office, each participating veteran would, on average, receive about \$15,500 in assistance.

In an effort to combat high rates of veteran unemployment, Congressman Smith has been particularly focused on ensuring that veterans receive job training so they can find employment once they leave the military. He has strongly supported employment programs, enhancing incentives for employers to hire veterans, and expanding on-the-job training, apprenticeship, and other educational programs for veterans and members of the National Guard and Reserves.

This year, Congressman Smith has cosponsored multiple bills to improve employment opportunities for veterans. The Veteran Employment Transition Act, H.R. 1865, encourages potential employers to hire veterans by providing a work opportunity tax credit. The Hiring Heroes Act, H.R. 1941, would allow separating servicemembers to enter the federal employment hiring process earlier, and require federal agencies to eliminate barriers between military occupational specialty (MOS)-related skills and civilian employment. Also, the Emergency Medic Transition Act, H.R. 2853, would provide military emergency medics the ability to quickly transition to a similar civilian job.

Congressman Smith also cosponsored the Helping Homeless Heroes Act, H.R. 2559. The bill would create an important safety net for veterans, distributing funding to community programs that provide housing and employment assistance to low income veterans.



Adam visited Naval Submarine Base New London in June 2011 to discuss military readiness and budget issues as Ranking Member on HASC

## **Veteran Healthcare**

With a significant number of new veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, it is essential that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has the resources necessary to perform their mission. Veterans must have timely access to mental health and other healthcare programs, and any other support they need to make a smooth transition into civilian life.

The current backlog of claims waiting to be seen at VA offices around the country is unacceptable. On October 11<sup>th</sup>, Congressman Smith supported passage of the Veterans' Benefits Act, H.R. 2349. The bill is specifically targeted to improve the efficiency and accuracy of employees and managers within the Veterans Benefits Administration, including annual reviews and ways to make better use of electronic communication. Congressman Smith has also supported the Rating and Processing Individuals' Disability (RAPID) Claims Act, H.R. 2377. The bill would streamline the process for veterans to receive expedited consideration of their claims.

## **Supporting Veteran Families**

The families of our military personnel also make great sacrifices in support of their loved ones. Congressman Smith has consistently worked to protect military families. This September, Congressman Smith sent a letter with his colleagues to the Treasury Department and relevant federal agencies, urging them to take action to protect military families who have been hard hit by the housing crisis, and take into account those who have received Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders. The House also passed a bill to provide surviving military spouses with mortgage protection, H.R. 1263. Passing with Congressman Smith's support, the bill protects widowed spouses of servicemembers from home seizures and foreclosures for one year following the death of a loved one.

Congressman Smith is also a cosponsor of the Military Spouses Employment Act, H.R. 687, which provides a work opportunity tax credit for potential employers that hire spouses of active duty servicemembers. The careers and financial well-being of military spouses and their families shouldn't be forced to take a backseat to their active duty spouse's career.



Adam commemorates Memorial Day with the Milton VFW.

**Working to honor the service and commitment of  
our military personnel, veterans, and their families.**